

The Commoner.

WILLIAM J. BRYAN, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR

VOL. 11, NO. 33

Lincoln, Nebraska, August 25, 1911

Whole Number 553

Publicity Wins

We now have "publicity before the election"—all that we asked for on this subject in the platform of 1908, and even more. But sentiment has grown until we are in position to ask for still more. We should now have publicity as to expenditures of those organizations that NOMINATE presidents. Why not find out who puts up the money for nominations? And why not find out who recommends appointments? Why should an appointing office act in the dark? Why not compel the president to open the record for inspection so that the public can know the power behind the throne? Why should the president appoint judges for life, and other officials for a limited term, without disclosing the information upon which his appointments are based. Let us have this publicity—and it should be BEFORE presidential nominations are made and BEFORE appointments are sent to the senate.

We should also have publicity as to the ownership of our big newspapers. Why should a paper's ownership be kept in the dark? The value of an opinion depends on the character and disinterestedness of the one expressing it. Let us have publicity as to newspaper ownership. We have had enough of assassination methods in subsidized journalism. A little light would be helpful, and it ought to come before the next presidential election. A democratic congress ought to inaugurate the reform. And now that the publicity campaign is started it should be kept up until all elections and nominations are made public affairs and secrecy is driven from the administration of the government.

YIELDING TO NECESSITY

Congress acted wisely in yielding to the president's demand and making the elimination of the recall of judges a condition precedent to admission. The president's position was indefensible but he was in a position to block statehood, and as the people of Arizona can restore the provision immediately it would have been folly to have opposed the president. Arizona's voters will doubtless accept the condition and come in—they can then exercise the rights enjoyed by the people of other states and restore the recall of judges.

PRESIDENT VETOES WOOL SCHEDULE

The president's veto of the wool schedule was not unexpected but it will not strengthen him before the country. His contention that the country wants a scientific revision by a commission is not borne out by the facts. The election of 1910 was a rebuke to the republican party

and included a repudiation of the commission idea. The people elected a congress to reduce the tariff—and if it had wanted reduction by commission it would have elected a republican congress. He says he was elected upon a platform and is carrying it out. That is a stronger position. He should have said: I was elected on a platform pledged to protection, and while I recognize that the country has repudiated the platform, still I feel bound by it and prefer to go down with the ship. I expect to be defeated and am bracing myself for it but I will not go back on those who elected me.

HERE'S TO NEW MEXICO

The admission of New Mexico is hailed with satisfaction. She enters the sisterhood of states with the cordial good will of the other members of the union. Less has been said about her admission because her constitution is reactionary, while Arizona's constitution is progressive. Congress very wisely provided that the people of New Mexico may, at the first election, so change their constitution as to make it easier to amend it. It is to be hoped that the people of the new state will avail themselves of the opportunity and thus bring the constitution more into harmony with the thought of modern times. New Mexico wants an increasing population and she can not hope to secure new settlers if she allows a corporate minority to tie her hands and hamper her freedom. Here's to New Mexico! May she give her voters control of her government.

WELCOME, ARIZONA

Welcome, Arizona. The long-delayed right of statehood is now yours. By intelligence, courage and patience, your people have rescued a wide area from the desert and made it a fruitful land. Your climate, your minerals, and your fertile valleys invite an increasing multitude and give promise of a splendid career. Your constitution is one of the best in the union, wisely framed and bravely defended. The personal objection of a president, biased against an elective judiciary, compels you to eliminate the recall as applied to judges, but you can restore it—and should—as soon as you are a state. Be brave and wise—the future is yours. Thrice welcome, Arizona.

UNDERWOOD'S HUMILIATION

Chairman Underwood persuaded the democratic caucus to consent to delay in the introduction of a bill reducing the iron and steel schedule and now comes the democrats of the senate and insist on such a reduction on iron and steel as a senate amendment to the cotton bill. It must humiliate Mr. Underwood to have the credit for this reduction taken from his committee and a democratic house and given to the senate minority. It would have been far better if that branch of congress having a clear majority had taken the initiative.

VETOES FREE LIST, TOO

The president's veto of the farmers' free list does not deserve much comment. The reasons given were absurd; after vetoing the wool bill he doubtless felt that it was useless to make further pretense of being in favor of tariff reform. He has gone over bag and baggage into the protectionist camp. Revision was but a fitful dream; he sleeps soundly now.

Whether it was wise for the democrats to take advantage of the trick played by the regular republicans on the insurgents depends on the facts. The democrats will need the insurgents in the next session and they can not afford to be unfair—even though the insurgents be too exacting at times.

Procrastination is not only the thief of time but the purloiner of prestige as well. Mr. Underwood's delay in reporting an iron and steel reduction bill lost him whatever advantage he might have gained from a good bill.

Veto Recall

On another page will be found President Taft's veto message, giving his reasons for refusing statehood to Arizona. His opposition is based entirely on his objection to the recall of judges. His objection to this provision is so great that he is not willing to leave the question to be acted upon by the people at the first election. Even though he knows that the people of Arizona can reinstate the provision immediately after they secure statehood he insists that they must eliminate the provision before they come in. His veto raises two questions: First, the right of a state to make its own constitution, and, second, the merits of the recall as applied to judges. Many senators and members of congress who look with disfavor on the recall voted for the Arizona-New Mexico resolution because they believe the states should be permitted to frame their constitutions to suit themselves. They were not willing to deny statehood to Arizona merely because she saw fit to include a constitutional provision that Oregon already has and that any state is free to adopt. The president, however, has no such respect for the rights of the states; he takes the Hamiltonian view rather than the Jeffersonian view, and does not hesitate to use the veto to enforce his own view upon Arizona. This is likely to give him some trouble during the coming campaign, although it will affect few votes compared with the number affected by the reasons given by him for opposing the recall.

The veto message presents, with considerable elaboration, his arguments against the recall as applied to judges. He does not say whether he is still opposed to the initiative and referendum—it will be remembered that he went all the way to Oklahoma four years ago to oppose these reforms—he does not say whether he opposes the recall as applied to other officials—he rests his case entirely upon the objections which he presents to the recall as applied to judges. He remarks, incidentally, that insufficient time is given for deliberation and for the subsiding of passion, but it is only fair to assume from his language that he would oppose the recall of judges NO MATTER HOW MUCH TIME WAS GIVEN FOR INVESTIGATION AND DELIBERATION. His veto message will stand or fall upon the judgment ultimately rendered by the people on the recall as applied to judges. What are the president's objections? The principal objection is that it, in his judgment, will rob the judge of his independence to have this "sword of Damocles" hanging over him. He suggests that "self-respecting" men might refuse to accept judicial positions if subject to the recall. This is really an assault upon the popular election of judges, for every judge who holds office by election is liable to recall at the end of his term, and, in proportion to the shortness of his term, may be influenced by the fear of being retired because of an unpopular decision. If independence of the wishes of the people is the one thing to be desired in a judge and that is destroyed by the recall then there is but one complete remedy, namely, APPOINTMENT FOR LIFE. That is the alternative, and Mr. Taft has not yet attacked the life tenure of appointive judges as dangerous to the country. He was, in fact, a federal judge with a life appointment before he became a cabinet officer.

It will be noticed, too, that the president magnifies the position of the judge. He is put in a class apart from and above other officials. From his lofty position he looks down upon legislators and executives and, purged of the dross that is mixed in them, reigns and rules uninfluenced by "momentary gusts of popular passion" or by the "hasty anger" of the majority. This is the ideal that President Taft sees before him. Why does he shut his eyes to actual facts? Does he forget how five United States supreme judges divided along partisan lines in the Tilden-Hayes controversy and voted

CONTENTS

PUBLICITY WINS
VETOES RECALL
IN KENTUCKY
"DICTATORSHIP"
THE ARIZONA CASE
THREE QUESTIONS
MISSOURI AND FOLK
HOW WALL STREET MADE THE
1907 PANIC
JUDGE WALTER CLARK OF
NORTH CAROLINA
"THE PEOPLE ARE BRYANIZING"
SENATORIAL CAMPAIGN IN VIRGINIA
EDITORIAL ACROBATICS
HOME DEPARTMENT
NEWS OF THE WEEK
WASHINGTON NEWS